

**STATEMENT OF SUE MASICA, ACTING DEPUTY DIRECTOR, NATIONAL PARK SERVICE, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR, BEFORE THE HOUSE NATURAL RESOURCES SUBCOMMITTEE ON FEDERAL LANDS, CONCERNING H.R. 2888, TO ESTABLISH THE STE.GENEVIEVE NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE IN THE STATE OF MISSOURI, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.**

**NOVEMBER 15, 2017**

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Chairman McClintock, Ranking Member Hanabusa, and members of the Subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to present the Department of the Interior's views on H.R. 2888, a bill to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to establish the Ste. Genevieve National Historic Site in the State of Missouri, and for other purposes.

The Department supports H.R. 2888 and would recommend a technical amendment described later in this statement.

This legislation would authorize the establishment of the Ste. Genevieve National Historical Park as a unit of the National Park System to preserve, protect, and interpret the themes of French settlement, vernacular architecture, and community form and farming on the frontier associated with Ste. Genevieve, a city along the Mississippi River with a nationally significant history. Establishment of the park would be conditioned on the Secretary of the Interior acquiring sufficient land to constitute a manageable park unit and entering into an agreement providing that land owned by the state, the city of Ste. Genevieve or other entities within the Ste. Genevieve Historic District would be managed consistent with the purposes of the act. The national historical park would consist of a select portion of the larger historic district.

H.R. 2888 authorizes the Secretary to provide interpretive tours and education programs within the historic district. It also allows the Secretary to provide technical assistance and to enter into cooperative agreements to preserve significant sites related to the purposes of the park.

The Ste. Genevieve Historic District National Historic Landmark (NHL), established on October 9, 1960, is one of the oldest NHL districts in the country. This designation initially recognized the unique concentration of French vertical log architecture. Subsequent research identified the national significance of contemporaneous examples of British-American and German-American architecture that contribute to the compelling historical associations with French exploration and settlement of the United States' interior in the late 18th and early 19th centuries and with the American territory that was settled following the Louisiana Purchase.

Ste. Genevieve offers an unparalleled opportunity to provide public understanding and appreciation of the themes of French settlement, vernacular architecture, and farming on the frontier. Ste. Genevieve is unique in terms of the character, quality, quantity, and rarity of its resources. There is no comparably protected or managed area interpreting these themes.

The proposed national historical park consists of about 13 acres of a mix of publicly and privately owned historic properties encompassed within the Ste. Genevieve Historic District NHL.

The Ste. Genevieve special resource study, completed in May 2016, estimated the annual cost of operation of the site to be \$800,000 to \$1.2 million per year. This estimate included funding for NPS staffing of 6-12 FTE, for interpretive and educational programs, and for outreach. Any additional facilities and properties would increase park operational and maintenance costs. Additional funds for maintenance, repairs and capital improvements would be awarded through the National Park Service's competitive process, subject to service-wide priorities and the availability of appropriations.

There is strong support for the establishment of the historical park. The National Park Service received many letters supporting the establishment of Ste. Genevieve as a unit of the national park system.

Finally, as this legislation has evolved over the last two years, a consensus has emerged that the Ste. Genevieve unit should be designated as a national historical park rather than a national historic site. If this is the intent, we recommend that the introductory title be amended to refer to the establishment of the "Ste. Genevieve National Historical Park", rather than the "Ste. Genevieve National Historic Site".

Mr. Chairman, this concludes my statement. I would be pleased to answer any questions you or other members of the Subcommittee may have.